STORIES IN VERSE

SELECTED BY

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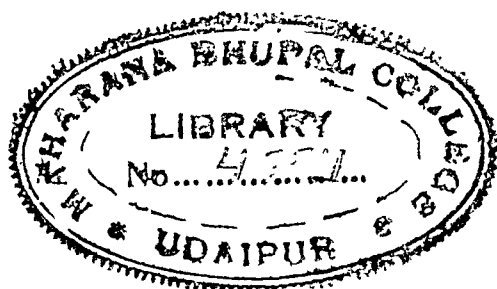
EDITOR OF 'POEMS OF ACTION'

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PREFACE

The principle of this selection is the same as that of the Editor's *Poems of Action*: that is to say, strict confinement to poems which relate a definite story of action—reflective and lyrical poems being excluded, and even descriptive poems unless the description is markedly subordinate to action. No poem that is given in the one book is repeated in the other. On the whole the present selection consists of simpler poems, intended for younger pupils; and Part I is still more elementary than Part II.

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PART I

Ballads and Anonymous Poems

PART II

Ballads and Anonymous Poems

'No flocks that range the valley free
  To slaughter I condemn:
Taught by that power that pities me,
  I learn to pity them.

'But from the mountain's grassy side 25
  A guiltless feast I bring;
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
  And water from the spring.

'Then, pilgrim, turn, thy cares forgo;
  All earth-born cares are wrong: 30
Man wants but little here below,
  Nor wants that little long.'

Soft as the dew from heaven descends,
  His gentle accents fell:
The modest stranger lowly bends, 35
  And follows to the cell.

Far in a wilderness obscure
  The lonely mansion lay;
A refuge to the neighbouring poor
  And strangers led astray. 40

No stores beneath its humble thatch
  Required a master's care;
The wicket, opening with a latch,
  Received the harmless pair.

'And, ah! forgive a stranger rude,
  A wretch forlorn,' she cried;
'Whose feet unhallowed thus intrude 95
  Where heaven and you reside.

'But let a maid thy pity share,
  Whom love has taught to stray;
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
  Companion of her way. 100

'My father lived beside the Tyne,
  A wealthy lord was he;
And all his wealth was marked as mine,
  He had but only me.

'To win me from his tender arms 105
  Unnumbered suitors came;
Who praised me for imputed charms,
  And felt or feigned a flame.

'Each hour a mercenary crowd
  With richest proffers strove: 110
Amongst the rest young Edwin bowed,
  But never talked of love.

'In humble, simplest habit clad,
  No wealth nor power had he;
Wisdom and worth were all he had, 115
  But these were all to me.

'And when beside me in the dale
He carolled lays of love;
His breath lent fragrance to the gale,
And music to the grove. 120

'The blossom opening to the day,
The dews of heaven refined,
Could nought of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

'The dew, the blossom on the tree, 125
With charms inconstant shine;
Their charms were his, but woe to me!
Their constancy was mine.

'For still I tried each fickle art,
Importunate and vain; 130
And while his passion touched my heart,
I triumphed in his pain.

'Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride;
And sought a solitude forlorn, 135
In secret, where he died.

'But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay. 140

'And there forlorn, despairing, hid,
I'll lay me down and die;
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I.'

'Forbid it, heaven!' the hermit cried, 145
And clasped her to his breast:
The wondering fair one turned to chide,
'Twas Edwin's self that pressed.

'Turn, Angelina, ever dear,
My charmer, turn to see 150
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

'Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign;
And shall we never, never part, 155
My life—my all that's mine?

'No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true;
The sigh that rends thy constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's too.' 160

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–74).

JOHN GILPIN

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A train-band captain eke was he
Of famous London Town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear— 5
Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair 10
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride 15
On horseback after we.

He soon replied—I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done. 20

John Gilpin, at his horse's side, 45
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin, 50
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew, 55
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came downstairs—
The wine is left behind! 60

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise.

Now mistress Gilpin (careful soul!) 65
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got 95
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;
Away went hat and wig!—
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig! 100

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern 105
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all; 110
And every soul cried out—Well done!
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
His fame soon spread around—
He carries weight! he rides a race! 115
'Tis for a thousand pound!

And still, as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw. 120

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road, 125
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced; 130
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
And till he came unto the Wash 135
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play. 140

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house—
They all at once did cry; 146
The dinner waits, and we are tired;
Said Gilpin—So am I!

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there; 150
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me to 155
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still. 160

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

What news? what news? your tidings tell; 165
  Tell me you must and shall—
Say why bare-headed you are come,
  Or why you come at all?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
  And loved a timely joke; 170
And thus unto the calender
  In merry guise he spoke:—

I came because your horse would come;
  And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here— 175
  They are upon the road.

The calender, right glad to find
  His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
  But to the house went in; 180

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
  A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
  Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and, in his turn, 185
  Thus showed his ready wit—
My head is twice as big as yours,
  They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away,
  That hangs upon your face; 190
And stop and eat, for well you may
  Be in a hungry case.

Said John—It is my wedding-day,
  And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton 195
  And I should dine at Ware.

So, turning to his horse, he said—
  I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
  You shall go back for mine. 200

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
  For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
  Did sing most loud and clear;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he 205
  Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
  As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
  Went Gilpin's hat and wig! 210
He lost them sooner than at first—
  For why?—they were too big!

Now, mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away, 215
She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell—
This shall be yours when you bring back
My husband safe and well. 220

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,
By catching at his rein;

But, not performing what he meant, 225
And gladly would have done,
The frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels!— 230
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scampering in the rear, 235
They raised the hue and cry:

Stop thief!—stop thief!—a highwayman!
  Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
  Did join in the pursuit. 240

And now the turnpike gates again
  Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
  That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did—and won it too!— 245
  For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
  He did again get down.

Now let us sing—Long live the king,
  And Gilpin long live he; 250
And, when he next doth ride abroad,
  May I be there to see!

William Cowper (1731–1800).

THE BOY AND SNAKE

Henry was every morning fed
With a full mess of milk and bread.
One day the boy his breakfast took,
And ate it by a purling brook
Which through his mother's orchard ran. 5
From that time ever when he can

Escape his mother's eye, he there
Takes his food in th' open air.
Finding the child delight to eat
Abroad, and make the grass his seat, 10
His mother lets him have his way.
With free leave Henry every day
Thither repairs, until she heard
Him talking of a fine *grey bird*.
This pretty bird, he said, indeed, 15
Came every day with him to feed,
And it loved him, and loved his milk,
And it was smooth and soft like silk.
His mother thought she'd go and see
What sort of bird this same might be. 20
So the next morn she follows Harry,
And carefully she sees him carry
Through the long grass his heaped-up mess.
What was her terror and distress,
When she saw the infant take 25
His bread and milk close to a snake!
Upon the grass he spreads his feast,
And sits down by his frightful guest,
Who had waited for the treat;
And now they both begin to eat. 30
Fond mother! shriek not; O beware
The least small noise, O have a care—
The least small noise that may be made,
The wily snake will be afraid—
If he hears the lightest sound, 35
He will inflict the envenomed wound.

She speaks not, moves not, scarce does breathe,
As she stands the trees beneath;
No sound she utters; and she soon
Sees the child lift up its spoon 40
And tap the snake upon the head,
Fearless of harm; and then he said,
As speaking to familiar mate,
'Keep on your own side, do, Grey Pate':
The snake then to the other side, 45
As one rebukèd, seems to glide;
And now again advancing nigh,
Again she hears the infant cry,
Tapping the snake, 'Keep further, do;
Mind, Grey Pate, what I say to you.' 50
The danger's o'er—she sees the boy
(O what a change from fear to joy!)
Rise and bid the snake 'good-bye';
Says he, 'Our breakfast's done, and I
Will come again to-morrow day': 55
Then, lightly tripping, ran away.

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB
(1775–1834; 1764–1847).

THE FAKENHAM GHOST

THE lawns were dry in Euston park;
(Here Truth inspires my tale)
The lonely footpath, still and dark,
Led over hill and dale.

Benighted was an ancient dame, 5
  And fearful haste she made
To gain the vale of Fakenham
  And hail its willow shade.

Her footsteps knew no idle stops,
  But followed faster still, 10
And echoed to the darksome copse
  That whispered on the hill;

Where clamorous rooks, yet scarcely hushed,
  Bespoke a peopled shade,
And many a wing the foliage brushed, 15
  And hovering circuits made.

The dappled herd of grazing deer,
  That sought the shades by day,
Now started from her path with fear,
  And gave the stranger way. 20

Darker it grew; and darker fears
  Come o'er her troubled mind—
When now a short quick step she hears
  Come patting close behind.

She turned; it stopped!—nought could she see
  Upon the gloomy plain! 26
But as she strove the sprite to flee,
  She heard the same again.

Now terror seized her quaking frame,
For, where the path was bare, 30
The trotting Ghost kept on the same!
She muttered many a prayer.

Yet once again, amidst her fright,
She tried what sight could do;
When through the cheating glooms of night 35
A monster stood in view.

Regardless of whate'er she felt,
It followed down the plain!
She owned her sins, and down she knelt,
And said her prayers again. 40

Then on she sped; and hope grew strong,
The white park gate in view;
Which pushing hard, so long it swung
That Ghost and all passed through.

Loud fell the gate against the post! 45
Her heart-strings like to crack;
For much she feared the grisly Ghost
Would leap upon her back.

Still on, pat, pat, the goblin went,
As it had done before; 50
Her strength and resolution spent,
She fainted at the door.

For many a laugh went through the vale;
  And some conviction too:
Each thought some other goblin tale,
  Perhaps, was just as true. 87

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD (1766–1823).

GEORGE AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP

His petticoats now George cast off,
  For he was four years old;
His trousers were of nankeen stuff,
  With buttons bright as gold.
'May I', said George, 'just go abroad, 5
  My pretty clothes to show?
May I, mamma? but speak the word';
  The answer was, 'No, no.

'Go, run below, George, in the court,
  But go not in the street, 10
Lest boys with you should make some sport,
  Or gipsies you should meet.'
Yet, though forbidden, he went out,
  That other boys might spy,
And proudly there he walked about, 15
  And thought—'How fine am I!'

But whilst he strutted through the street,
  With looks both vain and pert,
A sweep-boy passed, whom not to meet,
  He slipped—into the dirt. 20

The sooty lad, whose heart was kind,
To help him quickly ran,
And grasped his arm, with 'Never mind,
You're up, my little man'.

Sweep wiped his clothes with labour vain, 25
And begged him not to cry:
And when he'd blackened every stain,
Said 'Little sir, good-bye'.
Poor George, almost as dark as sweep,
And smeared in dress and face, 30
Bemoans with sobs, both loud and deep,
His well-deserved disgrace.

ADELAIDE O'KEEFFE (1776–1855?).

THE WIND IN A FROLIC

THE wind one morning sprang up from sleep,
Saying, 'Now for a frolic! now for a leap!
Now for a madcap galloping chase!
I'll make a commotion in every place!'
So it swept with a bustle right through a great
town, 5
Creaking the signs and scattering down
Shutters; and whisking, with merciless squalls,
Old women's bonnets and gingerbread stalls.
There never was heard a much lustier shout,
As the apples and oranges trundled about; 10
And the urchins, that stand with their thievish eyes
For ever on watch, ran off each with a prize.

Then away to the field it went blustering and
humming, 15
And the cattle all wondered whatever was coming.
It plucked by their tails the grave matronly cows,
And tossed the colts' manes all about their brows,
Till, offended at such a familiar salute,
They all turned their backs, and stood sullenly mute.
So on it went, capering and playing its pranks;
Whistling with reeds on the broad river's banks; 20
Puffing the birds as they sat on the spray,
Or the traveller grave on the king's highway.
It was not too nice to hustle the bags
Of the beggar, and flutter his dirty rags;
'Twas so bold that it feared not to play its joke 25
With the doctor's wig, or the gentleman's cloak.
Through the forest it roared, and cried gaily, 'Now,
You sturdy old oaks, I'll make you bow!'
And it made them bow without more ado,
Or it cracked their great branches through and
through. 30
Then it rushed like a monster on cottage and farm,
Striking their dwellers with sudden alarm;
And they ran out like bees in a midsummer swarm.
There were dames with their kerchiefs tied over
their caps,
To see if their poultry were free from mishaps; 35
The turkeys they gobbled, the geese screamed aloud,
And the hens crept to roost in a terrified crowd;

23 nice] particular.

There was rearing of ladders, and logs laying on
Where the thatch from the roof threatened soon to be gone. 39
But the wind had passed on, and had met in a lane
With a schoolboy, who panted and struggled in vain;
For it tossed him and twirled him, then passed, and he stood
With his hat in a pool and his shoe in the mud.

But away went the wind in its holiday glee,
And now it was far on the billowy sea, 45
And the lordly ships felt its staggering blow,
And the little boats darted to and fro.
But lo! it was night, and it sank to rest,
On the sea-bird's rock in the gleaming West,
Laughing to think, in its fearful fun, 50
How little of mischief it had done.

William Howitt (1792–1879).

CASABIANCA

The boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood, 5
As born to rule the storm;
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud, though child-like form.

The flames rolled on—he would not go
  Without his Father's word; 10
That Father, faint in death below,
  His voice no longer heard.

He called aloud:—'Say, Father, say
  If yet my task is done?'
He knew not that the chieftain lay 15
  Unconscious of his son.

'Speak, Father!' once again he cried,
  'If I may yet be gone!'
And but the booming shots replied,
  And fast the flames rolled on. 20

Upon his brow he felt their breath,
  And in his waving hair,
And looked from that lone post of death
  In still, yet brave despair.

And shouted but once more aloud, 25
  'My Father! must I stay?'
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
  The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapped the ship in splendour wild,
  They caught the flag on high, 30
And streamed above the gallant child,
  Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder sound—
The boy—oh! where was he?
Ask of the winds that far around 35
With fragments strewed the sea!—

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part—
But the noblest thing which perished there
Was that young faithful heart! 40

FELICIA HEMANS (1793–1835).

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

'WILL you walk into my parlour?' said the Spider to the Fly,
''Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you are there.' 4
'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'to ask me is in vain;
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again.'

'I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?' said the Spider to the Fly.

'There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in!' 15
'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'for I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!'

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, 'Dear friend, what can I do,
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have within my pantry good store of all that's nice; 15
I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?'
'Oh no, no,' said the little Fly, 'kind sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!'

'Sweet creature,' said the Spider, 'you're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes! 20
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself.'

'I thank you, gentle sir,' she said, 'for what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I'll call another day.'

The Spider turned him round about, and went into his den, 25
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon be back again;
So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing,—
'Come hither, hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and silver wing; 30
Your robes are green and purple—there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead.'

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew, 35
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue—
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.

He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal
den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out
again! 40

MARY HOWITT (1799-1888).

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SQUIRREL

THE mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel;
And the former called the latter 'Little Prig'.
Bun replied,
'You are doubtless very big; 5
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace 10
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry!
I'll not deny you make 15
A very pretty squirrel track;
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.'

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803–82).

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

It was the schooner Hesperus,
  That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
  To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax, 5
  Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds
  That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
  His pipe was in his mouth, 10
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
  The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,
  Had sailed the Spanish Main,
'I pray thee, put into yonder port, 15
  For I fear a hurricane.

'Last night the moon had a golden ring,
  And to-night no moon we see!'
The skipper he blew a whiff from his pipe,
  And a scornful laugh laughed he. 20

Colder and louder blew the wind,
  A gale from the North-east,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
  And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain   25
  The vessel in its strength:
She shuddered and paused, like a frighted steed,
  Then leaped her cable's length.

'Come hither! come hither! my little daughter,
  And do not tremble so: 30
For I can weather the roughest gale
  That ever wind did blow.'

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
  Against the stinging blast:
He cut a rope from a broken spar,   35
  And bound her to the mast.

'O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
  O say, what may it be?'
''Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!'—
  And he steered for the open sea.   40

'O father! I hear the sound of guns,
  O say, what may it be?'
'Some ship in distress, that cannot live
  In such an angry sea!'

'O father! I see a gleaming light, 45
  O say, what may it be?'
But the father answered never a word,
  A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
  With his face turned to the skies, 50
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
  On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
  That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave 55
  On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
  Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost the vessel swept
  Towards the reef of Norman's Woe. 60

And ever the fitful gusts between
  A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
  On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows, 65
  She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
  Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
  Looked soft as carded wool, 70
But the cruel rocks they gored her side
  Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
  With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass she stove and sank.— 75
  Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak on the bleak sea-beach
  A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair
  Lashed close to a drifting mast. 80

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
  The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
  On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus, 85
  In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
  On the reef of Norman's Woe!

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807–82).

A STORY FOR A CHILD

Little one, come to my knee!
  Hark how the rain is pouring
Over the roof, in the pitch-black night,
  And the wind in the woods a-roaring!

Hush, my darling, and listen, 5
  Then pay for the story with kisses:
Father was lost in the pitch-black night,
  In just such a storm as this is!

High up on the lonely mountains,
  Where the wild men watched and waited; 10
Wolves in the forest, and bears in the bush,
  And I on my path belated.

The rain and the night together
  Came down, and the wind came after,
Bending the props of the pine-tree roof, 15
  And snapping many a rafter.

I crept along in the darkness,
  Stunned, and bruised, and blinded,—
Crept to a fir with thick-set boughs,
  And a sheltering rock behind it. 20

There, from the blowing and raining
  Crouching, I sought to hide me:
Something rustled, two green eyes shone,
  And a wolf lay down beside me.

Little one, be not frightened: 25
  I and the wolf together,
Side by side, through the long, long night,
  Hid from the awful weather.

His wet fur pressed against me;
  Each of us warmed the other: 30
Each of us felt, in the stormy dark,
  That beast and man was brother.

And when the falling forest
  No longer crashed in warning,
Each of us went from our hiding-place 35
  Forth in the wild, wet morning.

Darling, kiss me payment!
  Hark how the wind is roaring:
Father's house is a better place
  When the stormy rain is pouring! 40

BAYARD TAYLOR (1825-78).

ROBIN HOOD AND THE BISHOP OF HEREFORD

COME, gentlemen all, and listen a while;
  A story I'll to you unfold—
How Robin Hood servèd the bishop
  When he robbed him of his gold.

As it befell in merry Barnsdale, 5
  And under the greenwood tree,
The bishop of Hereford was to come by,
  With all his company.

'Come, kill a venison,' said bold Robin Hood,
  'Come, kill me a good fat deer; 10
The bishop's to dine with me to-day,
  And he shall pay well for his cheer.

'We'll kill a fat venison,' said bold Robin Hood,
  'And dress 't by the highway-side;
And narrowly watch for the bishop 15
  Lest some other way he should ride.'

He dressed himself up in shepherd's attire,
  With six of his men also;
And the bishop of Hereford came thereby,
  As about the fire they did go. 20

'What matter is this?' said the bishop,
'Or for whom do you make this ado?
Or why do you kill the king's venison,
When your company is so few?'

'We are shepherds,' said bold Robin Hood, 25
'And we keep sheep all the year,
And we are disposed to be merry this day,
And to kill of the king's fat deer.'

'You are brave fellows,' said the bishop,
'And the king of your doings shall know: 30
Therefore make haste, come along with me,
For before the king you shall go.'

'O pardon, O pardon,' says bold Robin Hood,
'O pardon, I thee pray!
For it never becomes your lordship's coat 35
To take so many lives away.'

'No pardon, no pardon,' the bishop says,
'No pardon I thee owe;
Therefore make haste, come along with me,
For before the king you shall go.' 40

Robin set his back against a tree,
And his foot against a thorn,
And from underneath his shepherd's coat
He pulled out a bugle horn.

But when his friends did understand
His fond and foolish mind, 10
They sent him up to fair London,
An apprentice for to bind.

And when he had been seven long years,
And his love he had not seen,
'Many a tear have I shed for her sake 15
When she little thought of me.'

All the maids of Islington
Went forth to sport and play;
All but the bailiff's daughter dear;
She secretly stole away. 20

She put off her gown of grey,
And put on her puggish attire;
She 's up to fair London gone,
Her true-love to require.

As she went along the road, 25
The weather being hot and dry,
There was she aware of her true-love,
At length came riding by.

She stept to him, as red as any rose,
And took him by the bridle-ring: 30
'I pray you, kind sir, give me one penny,
To ease my weary limb.'

12 bind] be bound, engaged. 22 puggish] ragged, like *that of a tramp* (puggard). 24 require] seek.

'I prithee, sweetheart, canst thou tell me
  Where that thou wast born?'
'At Islington, kind sir,' said she, 35
  'Where I have had many a scorn.'

'I prithee, sweetheart, canst thou tell me
  Whether thou dost know
The bailiff's daughter of Islington?'
  'She's dead, sir, long ago.' 40

'Then will I sell my goodly steed,
  My saddle and my bow;
I will into some far country,
  Where no man doth me know.'

'O stay, O stay, thou goodly youth! 45
  She's alive, she is not dead;
Here she standeth by thy side,
  And is ready to be thy bride.'

'O farewell grief, and welcome joy,
  Ten thousand times and more! 50
For now I have seen my own true-love,
  That I thought I should have seen no more.'

SIR LANCELOT DU LAKE

When Arthur first in court began,
And was approvèd king,
By force of arms great victories won
And conquest home did bring.

Then into England straight he came 5
With fifty good and able
Knights, that resorted unto him,
And were of his round table:

And he had jousts and tournaments,
Whereto were many pressed, 10
Wherein some knights did far excel
And eke surmount the rest.

But one Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Who was approvèd well,
He for his deeds and feats of arms 15
All others did excel.

When he had rested him awhile,
In play, and game, and sport,
He said he would go prove himself
In some adventurous sort. 20

He armed rode in a forest wide,
  And met a damsel fair
Who told him of adventures great,
  Whereto he gave great ear.

'Such would I find,' quoth Lancelot: 25
  'For that cause came I hither.'
'Thou seem'st,' quoth she, 'a knight full good
  And I will bring thee thither,

'Whereas a mighty knight doth dwell,
  That now is of great fame: 30
Therefore tell me what wight thou art,
  And what may be thy name.'

'My name is Lancelot du Lake.'
  Quoth she, 'It likes me than;
Here dwells a knight who never was 35
  Yet match'd with any man:

'Who has in prison three-score knights
  And four that he did wound;
Knights of King Arthur's court they be,
  And of his table round.' 40

She brought him to a river side,
  And also to a tree,
Whereon a copper basin hung,
  And many shields to see.

34 than] then.

He struck so hard the basin broke; 45
  And Tarquin soon he spied:
Who drove a horse before him fast,
  Whereon a knight lay tied.

'Sir knight,' then said Sir Lancelot,
  'Bring me that horse-load hither, 50
And lay him down and let him rest;
  We'll try our force together:

'For, as I understand, thou hast,
  So far as thou art able,
Done great despite and shame unto 55
  The knights of the round table.'

'If thou be of the table round,'
  Quoth Tarquin speedily,
'Both thee and all thy fellowship
  I utterly defy.' 60

'That's overmuch,' quoth Lancelot, 'though,
  Defend thee bye and bye,'
They set their spears unto their steeds,
  And each at other fly.

They couched their spears (their horses ran 65
  As though there had been thunder)
And struck them each amidst their shields,
  Wherewith they broke asunder.

Their horses' backs brake under them,
The knights were both astound: 70
To avoid their horses they made haste
To light upon the ground.

They took them to their shields full fast,
Their swords they drew out then,
With mighty strokes most eagerly, 75
Each at the other ran.

They wounded were and bled full sore,
They both for breath did stand,
And leaning on their swords awhile,
Quoth Tarquin, 'Hold thy hand, 80

'And tell to me what I shall ask.'
'Say on,' quoth Lancelot, 'though.'
'Thou art,' quoth Tarquin, 'the best knight
That ever I did know;

'And like a knight that I did hate: 85
So that thou be not he,
I will deliver all the rest,
And eke accord with thee.'

'That is well said,' quoth Lancelot;
'But since it must be so, 90
What knight is that thou hatest thus?
I pray thee to me show.'

'His name is Lancelot du Lake,
He slew my brother dear;
Him I suspect of all the rest: 95
I would I had him here.'

'Thy wish thou hast, but yet unknown,
I am Lancelot du Lake,
Now knight of Arthur's table round;
King Haud's son of Schuwake; 100

'And I desire thee do thy worst.'
'Ho, ho!' quoth Tarquin, 'though,
One of us two shall end our lives
Before that we do go.

'If thou be Lancelot du Lake, 105
Then welcome shalt thou be.
Wherefore see thou thyself defend,
For now defy I thee.'

They buckled then together so
Like unto wild boars rashing; 110
And with their swords and shields they ran,
At one another slashing:

The ground besprinkled was with blood:
Tarquin began to yield;
For he gave back for weariness, 115
And low did bear his shield.

109 buckled] prepared for battle. 110 rashing] rushing.

This soon Sir Lancelot espied,
He leapt upon him then,
He pulled him down upon his knee,
And, rushing off his helm, 120

Forthwith he struck his neck in two,
And, when he had so done,
From prison threescore knights and four
Delivered every one.

THE BALLAD OF THE BRAVE LORD WILLOUGHBY

The fifteenth day of July,
With glistering spear and shield,
A famous fight in Flanders
Was foughten in the field:
The most courageous officers 5
Was English captains three,
But the bravest man in battle
Was brave Lord Willoughby.

The next was Captain Norris,
A valiant man was he: 10
The other, Captain Turner,
That from field would never flee:
With fifteen hundred fighting men,
Alas, there was no more,—
They fought with forty thousand then 15
Upon the bloody shore.

'Stand to it, noble pikemen,
  And look you round about;
And shoot you right, you bowmen,
  And we will keep them out: 20
You musket and caliver men,
  Do you prove true to me,
I'll be the foremost man in fight!'
  Says brave Lord Willoughby.

And then the bloody enemy 25
  They fiercely did assail:
And fought it out most valiantly,
  Not doubting to prevail:
The wounded men on both sides fell,
  Most piteous for to see, 30
Yet nothing could the courage quell
  Of brave Lord Willoughby.

For seven hours to all men's view
  This fight endurèd sore,
Until our men so feeble grew 35
  That they could fight no more:
And then upon dead horses
  Full savourly they eat,
And drank the puddle-water,
  For no better they could get. 40

When they had fed so freely,
  They kneelèd on the ground,
And praisèd God devoutly,
  For the favour they had found;

21 caliver] light musket.

And beating up their colours, 45
The fight they did renew,
And turning toward the Spaniard,
Five thousand more they slew.

The sharp steel-pointed arrows,
And bullets thick did fly; 50
Then did our valiant soldiers
Charge on most furiously:
Which made the Spaniards waver,
They thought it best to flee;
They feared the stout behaviour 55
Of brave Lord Willoughby.

Then quoth the Spanish General,
'Come, let us march away,
I fear we shall be spoilèd all,
If that we longer stay: 60
For yonder comes Lord Willoughby,
With courage fierce and fell,
He will not give one inch of ground
For all the devils in hell.'

And then the fearful enemy 65
Was quickly put to flight;
Our men pursued courageously,
And rout their forces quite:
And at last they gave a shout
Which echoed through the sky; 70
'God and Saint George for England!'
The conquerors did cry.

This news was brought to England,
  With all the speed might be,
And told unto our gracious Queen, 75
  Of this same victory.
'O this is brave Lord Willoughby,
  My love hath ever won;
Of all the lords of honour
  'Tis he great deeds hath done.' 80

For soldiers that were maimèd
  And wounded in the fray,
The Queen allowed a pension
  Of eighteenpence a day:
Beside, all costs and charges 85
  She quit and set them free,
And this she did all for the sake
  Of brave Lord Willoughby.

Then courage, noble Englishmen,
  And never be dismayed, 90
If that we be but one to ten
  We will not be afraid
To fight the foreign enemies,
  And set our country free;
And thus I end this bloody bout 95
  Of brave Lord Willoughby.

ALICE BRAND

I

MERRY it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

O Alice Brand, my native land 5
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do!

'O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue, 10
That on the night of our luckless flight
Thy brother bold I slew.

'Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed, 15
And stakes to fence our cave.

'And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughter'd deer,
To keep the cold away.'— 20

14 glaive] sword.

'Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie.
  For thou wert christened man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
  For muttered word or ban. 50

'Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
  The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
  Nor yet find leave to die!'

III

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood, 55
  Though the birds have stilled their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
  And Richard is faggots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
  Before Lord Richard stands, 60
And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
'I fear not sign,' quoth the grisly elf,
  'That is made with bloody hands.'

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
  That woman void of fear,— 65
'And if there's blood upon his hand,
  'Tis but the blood of deer.'

'Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
  It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood, 70
  The blood of Ethert Brand.'

'O Coo-me-doo, my love sae true,
  If ye'll come doun to me, 10
Ye'se hae a cage o' gude red gowd
  Instead o' simple tree.

'I'll put gowd hingers roun' your cage,
  And siller roun' your wa';
I'll gar ye shine as fair a bird 15
  As ony o' them a'.'

But she had nae these words well spoke,
  Nor yet these words well said,
Till Coo-me-doo flew frae the tower
  And lichted on her head. 20

Then she has brought this pretty bird
  Hame to her bowers and ha',
And made him shine as fair a bird
  As ony o' them a'.

When day was gone, and night was come, 25
  About the evening-tide,
This lady spied a gallant youth
  Stand straight up by her side.

'From whence cam' ye, young man?' she said;
  'That does surprise me sair; 30
My door was bolted right secure,
  What way hae ye come here?'—

13 hingers] hangings, curtains. 15 gar] make.

'O haud your tongue, ye lady fair,
Lat a' your folly be;
Mind ye not o' your turtle-doo
Ye wiled from aff the tree?'— 35

'What country come ye frae?' she said,
'An' what 's your pedigree?'—
'O it was but this verra day
That I cam' ower the sea. 40

'My mither lives on foreign isles,
A queen o' high degree;
And by her spells I am a doo
With you to live an' dee.'—

'O Coo-my-doo, my love sae true, 45
Nae mair frae me ye 'se gae.'—
'That 's never my intent, my love;
As ye said, it shall be sae.'

Then he has stay'd in bower wi' her
For six lang years and ane, 50
Till sax young sons to him she bare,
And the seventh she 's brought hame.

But aye, as ever a child was born,
He carried them away,
And brought them to his mither's care 55
As fast as he could fly.

'Get dancers here to dance,' she said,
'And minstrels for to play;
For here 's my young son Florentine
Come hame wi' me to stay.'—

'Get nae dancers to dance, mither, 85
Nor minstrels for to play;
For the mither o' my seven sons,
The morn 's her wedding-day.'—

'O tell me, tell me, Florentine,
Tell me, an tell me true; 90
Tell me this day without a flaw
What I will do for you?'—

'Instead of dancers to dance, mither,
Or minstrels for to play,
Turn four-and-twenty well-wight men 95
Like storks in feathers gray:

'My seven sons in seven swans
Aboon their heads to flee;
And I mysel' a gay goshawk,
A bird o' high degree.' 100

Then siching said the Queen hersel',
'That thing 's too high for me!'
But she applied to an auld woman
Wha had mair skill than she.

95 well-wight] strong, lusty. 99 goshawk] large short-winged hawk.

They lichted next on the bride-maidens,
Then on the bride's own head ; 130
And wi' the twinkling o' an e'e
The bride an' them were fled.

There 's ancient men at weddings been
For sixty years or more,
But siccan a curious wedding-day 135
They never saw before.

For naething could the companie do,
Nor naething could they say ;
But they saw a flock o' pretty birds
That took their bride away. 140

THE ABBOT OF CANTERBURY

An ancient story I'll tell you anon
Of a notable prince, that was callèd King John ;
And he rulèd England with main and with might,
For he did great wrong, and maintain'd little right.

And I'll tell you a story, a story so merry, 5
Concerning the Abbot of Canterbùry ;
How, for his housekeeping and high renown,
They rode post for him to fair London town.

An hundred men, the king did hear say,
The abbot kept in his house every day ; 10
And fifty gold chains, without any doubt,
In velvet coats waited the abbot about.

'Now three weeks' space to thee will I give,
And that is the longest time thou hast to live;
For if thou dost not answer my questions three,
Thy lands and thy living are forfeit to me.' 40

Away rode the abbot all sad at that word,
And he rode to Cambridge, and Oxenford;
But never a doctor there was so wise
That could with his learning an answer devise.

Then home rode the abbot of comfort so cold, 45
And he met with his shepherd a-going to fold:
'How now, my lord abbot, you are welcome home;
What news do you bring us from good King
John?'—

'Sad news, sad news, shepherd, I must give;
That I have but three days more to live: 50
For if I do not answer him questions three,
My head will be smitten from my body.

'The first is to tell him there in that stead,
With his crown of gold so fair on his head,
Among all his liege-men so noble of birth, 55
To within one penny of what he is worth.

'The second, to tell him, without any doubt,
How soon he may ride this whole world about:
And at the third question I must not shrink,
But tell him there truly what he does think.' 60

'Now cheer up, sir abbot, did you never hear yet,
That a fool he may learn a wise man wit?
Lend me horse, and serving-men, and your apparel,
And I'll ride to London to answer your quarrel.

'Nay frown not, if it hath been told unto me, 65
I am like your lordship, as ever may be;
And if you will but lend me your gown,
There is none shall know us at fair London town.'—

'Now horses and serving-men thou shalt have,
With sumptuous array most gallant and brave; 70
With crozier, and mitre, and rochet, and cope,
Fit to appear 'fore our father the Pope.'—

'Now welcome, sir abbot,' the king he did say,
''Tis well thou'rt come back to keep thy day;
For and if thou canst answer my questions three, 75
Thy life and thy living both savèd shall be.

'And first, when thou seest me here in this stead,
With my crown of gold so fair on my head,
Among all my liege-men so noble of birth,
Tell me to one penny what I am worth.'— 80

'For thirty pence our Saviour was sold
Among the false Jews, as I have been told;
And twenty-nine is the worth of thee,
For I think thou art *one* penny worser than he.'

71 rochet] surplice. cope] cloak.

The king he laughed, and swore by St. Bittel, 85
'I did not think I had been worth so little!
—Now secondly tell me, without any doubt,
How soon I may ride this whole world about.'

'You must rise with the sun, and ride with the same,
Until the next morning he riseth again; 90
And then your grace need not make any doubt,
But in twenty-four hours you'll ride it about.'

The king he laughed, and swore by St. Jone:
'I did not think it could be done so soon!
—Now from the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think.' 96

'Yea, that shall I do, and make your grace merry:
You think I'm the Abbot of Canterbùry;
But I'm his poor shepherd, as plain you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for me.'

The king he laughed, and swore by the mass, 101
'I'll make thee lord abbot this day in his place!'—
'Now nay, my liege, be not in such speed,
For alack I can neither write, nor read.'

'Four nobles a week, then, I will give thee 105
For this merry jest thou hast shown unto me;
And tell the old abbot, when thou comest home,
Thou hast brought him a pardon from good King
John.'

PART II

THE CAVALIER'S ESCAPE

TRAMPLE! trample! went the roan,
  Trap! trap! went the gray;
But pad! *pad*! PAD! like a thing that was mad,
  My chestnut broke away.—
It was just five miles from Salisbury town, 5
  And but one hour to day.

Thud! THUD! came on the heavy roan,
  Rap! RAP! the mettled gray;
But my chestnut mare was of blood so rare,
  That she showed them all the way. 10
Spur on! spur on!—I doffed my hat,
  And wished them all good-day.

They splashed through miry rut and pool—
  Splintered through fence and rail;
But chestnut Kate switched over the gate— 15
  I saw them droop and tail.
To Salisbury town—but a mile of down,
  Once over this brook and rail.

THE MILKMAID

ONCE on a time a rustic dame,
(No matter for the lady's name)
Wrapt up in deep imagination,
Indulg'd her pleasing contemplation;
While on a bench she took her seat, 5
And plac'd the milk-pail at her feet.
Oft in her hand she chink'd the pence,
The profits which arose from thence;
While fond ideas fill'd her brain
Of layings up, and monstrous gain, 10
Till every penny which she told
Creative fancy turn'd to gold;
And reasoning thus from computation,
She spoke aloud her meditation.

'Please heaven but to preserve my health, 15
No doubt I shall have store of wealth;
It must of consequence ensue
I shall have store of lovers too.
O, how I'll break their stubborn hearts
With all the pride of female arts. 20
What suitors then will kneel before me!
Lords, Earls, and Viscounts shall adore me.
When in my gilded coach I ride,
My Lady, at his Lordship's side,
How will I laugh at all I meet 25
Clattering in pattens down the street!

And Lobbin then I'll mind no more,
However I lov'd him heretofore:
Or, if he talks of plighted truth,
I will not hear the simple youth, 30
But rise indignant from my seat,
And spurn the lubber from my feet.'

Action, alas! the speaker's grace,
Ne'er came in more improper place,
For in the tossing forth her shoe 35
What fancied bliss the maid o'erthrew!
While down at once, with hideous fall,
Came lovers, wealth, and milk, and all.

ROBERT LLOYD (1733–64).

THE ARETHUSA

COME, all ye jolly sailors bold,
Whose hearts are cast in honour's mould,
While English glory I unfold;
Hurrah! for the Arethusa!
She is a frigate tight and brave, 5
As ever stemmed the dashing wave,
Her men are staunch to their favourite launch;
And when the foe shall meet our fire,
Sooner than strike, we'll all expire
On board of the Arethusa. 10

'Twas with the spring fleet she went out,
The English Channel to cruise about,
When four French sail in show so stout
Bore down on the Arethusa.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish 25
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere;
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud; 30
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast.

Not free from boding thoughts, a while
The Shepherd stood; then makes his way 35
O'er rocks and stones, following the Dog
As quickly as he may;
Nor far had gone before he found
A human skeleton on the ground;
The appalled Discoverer with a sigh 40
Looks round, to learn the history.

From those abrupt and perilous rocks
The Man had fallen, that place of fear!
At length upon the Shepherd's mind
It breaks, and all is clear: 45
He instantly recalled the name,
And who he was, and whence he came;
Remembered, too, the very day
On which the Traveller passed this way.

But hear a wonder, for whose sake 50
This lamentable tale I tell!
A lasting monument of words
This wonder merits well.

'Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
  And dry that cheek so pale; 10
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
  And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
  His sword in battle keen'—
But aye she loot the tears down fa' 15
  For Jock of Hazeldean.

'A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
  Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
  Nor palfrey fresh and fair; 20
And you, the foremost o' them a',
  Shall ride our forest queen'—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
  For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide, 25
  The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
  And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
  The ladie was not seen! 30
She's o'er the Border, and awa'
  Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832).

ROSABELLE

O LISTEN, listen, ladies gay!
  No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
  That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

—'Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew! 5
  And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
  Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

'The blackening wave is edg'd with white:
  To inch and rock the sea-mews fly; 10
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
  Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

'Last night the gifted Seer did view
  A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch: 15
  Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?'

''Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
  To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
  Sits lonely in her castle-hall. 20

'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle.'

O'er Roslin all that dreary night 25
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glar'd on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen; 30
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud, 35
Sheath'd in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail. 40

Blaz'd battlement and pinnet high,
Blaz'd every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

41. pinnet] pinnacle.

But still the Wildgrave onward rides;
  Halloo, halloo! and, hark again!
When, spurring from opposing sides, 15
  Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
  Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
The right-hand steed was silver white,
  The left, the swarthy hue of hell. 20

The right-hand Horseman, young and fair,
  His smile was like the morn of May;
The left, from eye of tawny glare,
  Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman's cap on high, 25
  Cried, 'Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
  To match the princely chase, afford?'

'Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,'
  Cried the fair youth, with silver voice; 30
'And for devotion's choral swell,
  Exchange the rude unhallow'd noise.

'To-day, the ill-omen'd chase forbear,
  Yon bell yet summons to the fane;
To-day the Warning Spirit hear, 35
  To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain.'

'Away, and sweep the glades along!'
  The Sable Hunter hoarse replies;
'To muttering monks leave matin-song,
  And bells, and books, and mysteries.' 40

The Wildgrave spurr'd his ardent steed,
  And, launching forward with a bound,
'Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
  Would leave the jovial horn and hound?

'Hence, if our manly sport offend! 45
  With pious fools go chant and pray:
Well hast thou spoke, my dark-brow'd friend:
  Halloo, halloo! and hark away!'

The Wildgrave spurr'd his courser light,
  O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill; 50
And on the left and on the right,
  Each Stranger Horseman follow'd still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
  A stag more white than mountain snow:
And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn, 55
  'Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!'

A heedless wretch has cross'd the way;
  He gasps the thundering hoofs below;—
But, live who can, or die who may,
  Still, 'forward, forward!' on they go. 60

See, where yon simple fences meet,
  A field with Autumn's blessings crown'd:
See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
  A husbandman with toil embrown'd:

'O mercy, mercy, noble lord! 65
  Spare the poor's pittance,' was his cry,
'Earn'd by the sweat these brows have pour'd,
  In scorching hour of fierce July.'

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
  The left still cheering to the prey; 70
The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
  But furious holds the onward way.

'Away, thou hound! so basely born,
  Or dread the scourge's echoing blow!'
Then loudly rung his bugle-horn, 75
  'Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!'

So said, so done: a single bound
  Clears the poor labourer's humble pale;
Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
  Like dark December's stormy gale. 80

And man and horse, and hound and horn,
  Destructive sweep the field along;
While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
  Fell Famine marks the maddening throng.

Again uproused, the timorous prey 85
Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill;
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appear'd;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd; 90
Amid the flock's domestic herd
His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
His track the steady blood-hounds trace;
O'er moss and moor, unwearied still, 95
The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall;
'O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
These herds, a widow's little all;
These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care!' 100

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
But furious keeps the onward way.

'Unmanner'd dog! To stop my sport 105
Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
Though human spirits, of thy sort,
Were tenants of these carrion kine!'

Again he winds his bugle-horn,
'Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!' 110
And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;
Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;
The murderous cries the stag appal,
Again he starts, new-nerved by fear. 115

With blood besmear'd, and white with foam,
While big the tears of anguish pour,
He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
The humble hermit's hallow'd bower. 120

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
Fast rattling on his traces go:
The sacred chapel rung around
With, 'Hark away! and, holla, ho!'

All mild, amid the rout profane, 125
The holy hermit pour'd his prayer;
'Forbear with blood God's house to stain;
Revere his altar, and forbear!

'The meanest brute has rights to plead,
Which, wrong'd by cruelty, or pride, 130
Draw vengeance on the ruthless head:
Be warn'd at length, and turn aside.'

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
The Black, wild whooping, points the prey:
Alas! the Earl no warning heeds, 135
But frantic keeps the forward way.

'Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!' 140

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
'Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!'
But off, on whirlwind's pinions borne,
The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound, 145
And clamour of the chase, was gone;
For hoofs, and howls, and bugle-sound,
A deadly silence reign'd alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around;
He strove in vain to wake his horn, 150
In vain to call: for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
No distant baying reach'd his ears:
His courser, rooted to the ground, 155
The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
  Dark as the darkness of the grave;
And not a sound the still invades,
  Save what a distant torrent gave. 160

High o'er the sinner's humbled head
  At length the solemn silence broke;
And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
  The awful voice of thunder spoke.

'Oppressor of creation fair! 165
  Apostate Spirits' harden'd tool!
Scorner of God! Scourge of the poor!
  The measure of thy cup is full.

'Be chased for ever through the wood;
  For ever roam the affrighted wild; 170
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
  God's meanest creature is his child.'

'Twas hush'd: one flash, of sombre glare,
  With yellow tinged the forests brown;
Uprose the Wildgrave's bristling hair, 175
  And horror chill'd each nerve and bone.

Cold pour'd the sweat in freezing rill;
  A rising wind began to sing;
And louder, louder, louder still,
  Brought storm and tempest on its wing. 180

Earth heard the call; her entrails rend;
  From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
Mix'd with sulphureous flames, ascend
  The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose, 185
  Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
His eye like midnight lightning glows,
  His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
  With many a shriek of helpless woe; 190
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
  And 'Hark away!' and 'Holla, ho!'

With wild despair's reverted eye,
  Close, close behind, he marks the throng.
With bloody fangs and eager cry; 195
  In frantic fear he scours along.

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
  Till time itself shall have an end;
By day, they scour earth's cavern'd space,
  At midnight's witching hour, ascend. 200

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
  That oft the lated peasant hears;
Appall'd, he signs the frequent cross,
  When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear 205
For human pride, for human woe,
When, at his midnight mass, he hears
The infernal cry of 'Holla, ho!'

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

ADELGITHA

THE ordeal's fatal trumpet sounded,
And sad pale Adelgitha came,
When forth a valiant champion bounded
And slew the slanderer of her fame.

She wept, delivered from her danger; 5
But when he knelt to claim her glove—
'Seek not,' she cried, 'oh! gallant stranger,
For hapless Adelgitha's love.

'For he is in a foreign far land
Whose arm should now have set me free; 10
And I must wear the willow garland
For him that's dead, or false to me.'

'Nay! say not that his faith is tainted!'
He raised his vizor: at the sight
She fell into his arms and fainted; 15
It was indeed her own true knight!

THOMAS CAMPBELL (1777–1844).

NAPOLEON AND THE BRITISH SAILOR

I LOVE contemplating, apart
  From all his homicidal glory,
The traits that soften to our heart
  Napoleon's story.

'Twas when his banners at Boulogne — 5
  Arm'd in our island every freeman,
His navy chanced to capture one
  Poor British seaman.

They suffer'd him, I know not how,
  Unprisoned on the shore to roam; — 10
And aye was bent his longing brow
  On England's home.

His eye, methinks, pursued the flight
  Of birds to Britain half-way over
With envy; they could reach the white — 15
  Dear cliffs of Dover.

A stormy midnight watch, he thought,
  Than this sojourn would have been dearer,
If but the storm his vessel brought
  To England nearer. — 20

At last, when care had banished sleep,
  He saw one morning, dreaming, doting,
An empty hogshead from the deep
  Come shoreward floating.

He hid it in a cave, and wrought 25
The live-long day laborious, lurking,
Until he launched a tiny boat
By mighty working.

Heaven help us! 'twas a thing beyond
Description wretched: such a wherry 30
Perhaps ne'er ventured on a pond,
Or crossed a ferry.

For ploughing in the salt-sea field
It would have made the boldest shudder—
Untarr'd, uncompass'd, and unkeel'd, 35
No sail, no rudder.

From neighbouring woods he interlaced
His sorry skiff with wattled willows;
And thus equipp'd he would have passed
The foaming billows. 40

But Frenchmen caught him on the beach,—
His little Argo sorely jeering
Till tidings of him chanced to reach
Napoleon's hearing.

With folded arms Napoleon stood, 45
Serene alike in peace and danger;
And, in his wonted attitude,
Address'd the stranger:

'Rash man, that wouldst yon Channel pass
On twigs and staves so rudely fashioned! 50
Thy heart with some sweet British lass
Must be impassioned.'

'I have no sweetheart,' said the lad;
'But, absent long from one another,
Great was the longing that I had 55
To see my mother.'

'And so thou shalt,' Napoleon said,
'Ye've both my favour fairly won;
A noble mother must have bred
So brave a son.' 60

He gave the tar a piece of gold,
And, with a flag of truce, commanded
He should be shipp'd to England Old,
And safely landed.

Our sailor oft could scantly shift 65
To find a dinner, plain and hearty;
But never changed the coin and gift
Of Bonaparté.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

NOTE.—This anecdote has been published in several public journals, both French and British. My belief in its authenticity was confirmed by an Englishman, long resident at Boulogne, lately telling me that he remembered the circumstance to have been generally talked of in the place.—T. C.

ABOU BEN ADHEM

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase !)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold :— 5
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
'What writest thou ?'—The vision rais'd its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer'd, 'The names of those who love the Lord.' 9
'And is mine one ?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still ; and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.' 14
The angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had bless'd,
And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

J. H. Leigh Hunt (1784–1859).

In two days' time, with haggard eyes and beard,
And shaken voice, the suitor re-appear'd, 24
And said, 'He's come.'—Mahmoud said not a word,
But rose, and took four slaves, each with a sword,
And went with the vex'd man. They reach the place,
And hear a voice, and see a female face,
That to the window flutter'd in affright.
'Go in,' said Mahmoud, 'and put out the light; 30
But tell the females first to leave the room;
And when the drunkard follows them, we come.'

The man went in. There was a cry, and hark!
A table falls, the window is struck dark;
Forth rush the breathless women; and behind 35
With curses comes the fiend in desperate mind.
In vain: the sabres soon cut short the strife,
And chop the shrieking wretch, and drink his bloody
life.

'Now *light* the light,' the Sultan cried aloud.
'Twas done; he took it in his hand, and bow'd 40
Over the corpse, and look'd upon the face;
Then turn'd and knelt beside it in the place,
And said a prayer, and from his lips there crept
Some gentle words of pleasure, and he wept.

In reverent silence the spectators wait, 45
Then bring him at his call both wine and meat;
And when he had refresh'd his noble heart,
He bade his host be blest, and rose up to depart.

In this fight was Death the gainer, 5
Spite of vassal and retainer,
And the lands his sires had plundered,
Written in the Doomsday Book.

By his bed a monk was seated,
Who in humble voice repeated 10
Many a prayer and pater-noster,
From the missal on his knee;

And, amid the tempest pealing,
Sounds of bells came faintly stealing,
Bells, that from the neighbouring cloister 15
Rang for the Nativity.

In the hall the serf and vassal
Held, that night, their Christmas wassail;
Many a carol, old and saintly,
Sang the minstrels and the waits; 20

And so loud these Saxon gleemen
Sang to slaves the songs of freemen,
That the storm was heard but faintly,
Knocking at the castle-gates.

Till at length the lays they chanted 25
Reached the chamber terror-haunted,
Where the monk, with accents holy,
Whispered at the baron's ear.

Tears upon his eyelids glistened,
As he paused awhile and listened, 30
And the dying baron slowly
  Turned his weary head to hear.

'Wassail for the kingly stranger
Born and cradled in a manger!
King like David, priest like Aaron, 35
  Christ is born to set us free!'

And the lightning showed the sainted
Figures on the casement painted,
And exclaimed the shuddering baron,
  'Miserere, Domine!' 40

In that hour of deep contrition
He beheld, with clearer vision,
Through all outward show and fashion,
  Justice, the Avenger, rise.

All the pomp of earth had vanished, 45
Falsehood and deceit were banished,
Reason spake more loud than passion,
  And the truth wore no disguise.

Every vassal of his banner,
Every serf born to his manor, 50
All those wronged and wretched creatures,
  By his hand were freed again.

And, as on the sacred missal
He recorded their dismissal,
Death relaxed his iron features, 55
 And the monk replied, 'Amen!'

Many centuries have been numbered
Since in death the baron slumbered
By the convent's sculptured portal,
 Mingling with the common dust: 60

But the good deed, through the ages
Living in historic pages,
Brighter grows and gleams immortal,
 Unconsumed by moth or rust.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-82).

BARBARA FRIETCHIE

This poem was written in strict conformity to the account of the incident as I had it from respectable and trustworthy sources. It has since been the subject of a good deal of conflicting testimony, and the story was probably incorrect in some of its details. It is admitted by all that Barbara Frietchie was no myth, but a worthy and highly esteemed gentlewoman, intensely loyal and a hater of Slavery Rebellion, holding her Union flag sacred and keeping it with her Bible; that when the Confederates halted before her house, and entered her door-yard, she denounced them in vigorous language, shook her cane in their faces, and drove them out; and when General Burnside's troops followed close upon Jackson's, she waved her flag and cheered them. It is stated that May Quantrell,

a brave and loyal lady in another part of the city, did wave her flag in sight of the Confederates. It is possible that there has been a blending of the two incidents.—J. G. W.

UP from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep, 5
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall; 10

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun 15
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down; 20

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right 25
He glanced: the old flag met his sight.

'Halt!'—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
'Fire!'—out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash. 30

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

'Shoot, if you must, this old grey head, 35
But spare your country's flag,' she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word; 40

'Who touches a hair of you grey head
Dies like a dog! March on!' he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost 45
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night. 50

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honour to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave, 55
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town! 60

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-92).

THE BEGGAR MAID

Her arms across her breast she laid;
  She was more fair than words can say:
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
  Before the king Cophetua.

In robe and crown the king stept down, 5
  To meet and greet her on her way;
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
  'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
  She in her poor attire was seen: 10
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
  One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
  In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath: 15
  'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'

Lord Tennyson (1809–92).

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

The varying year with blade and sheaf
  Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
  Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd, 5
  Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
  To spirits folded in the womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
  On every slanting terrace-lawn. 10
The fountain to his place returns
  Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
  On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower, 15
  The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:
  In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
  Droop sleepily: no sound is made, 20
Not even of a gnat that sings.
  More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
  That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask 25
  Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
  The maid-of-honour blooming fair:
The page has caught her hand in his:
  Her lips are sever'd as to speak: 30
His own are pouted to a kiss:
  The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
  The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass, 35
  And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
  Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
  He must have been a jovial king. 40

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
  At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
  And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green 45
  Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
  High up, the topmost palace-spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers die,
  And thought and time be born again, 50
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
  Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
  As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain, 55
  And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

Year after year unto her feet,
  She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purpled coverlet,
  The maiden's jet-black hair has grown, 60
On either side her tranced form
  Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
  And moves not on the rounded curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid 65
  Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
  Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
  With bracelets of the diamond bright: 70
Her constant beauty doth inform
  Stillness with love, and day with light.

III

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
  In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd 75
  That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
  The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
  A perfect form in perfect rest. 80

THE ARRIVAL

I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth :
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies— 85
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass, 90
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead :
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'
This proverb flashes thro' his head, 95
'The many fail : the one succeeds.'

II

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :
He breaks the hedge : he enters there :
The colour flies into his cheeks :
He trusts to light on something fair : 100
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps wind ; 105
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee. 110
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be !'

THE REVIVAL

I

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt, 115
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt. 120

II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife, 125
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III

And last with these the king awoke,
  And in his chair himself uprear'd, 130
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
  'By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
  My beard has grown into my lap.'
The barons swore, with many words, 135
  'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
  My joints are something stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
  I mention'd half an hour ago?' 140
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
  In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
  And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE

I

AND on her lover's arm she leant, 145
  And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
  In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
  Beyond their utmost purple rim, 150
And deep into the dying day
  The happy princess follow'd him.

II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;'
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears, 155
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn. 160

III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!'
And o'er them many a flowing range 165
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?' 170
'O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.'
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day, 175
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

LORD TENNYSON (1809–92).

LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,
  And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
  To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn: 5
  Lovers long-betroth'd were they:
They two will wed the morrow morn:
  God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,
  Nor for my lands so broad and fair;   10
He loves me for my own true worth,
  And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
  Said, 'Who was this that went from thee?'
'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,   15
  'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,
  'That all comes round so just and fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
  And you are not the Lady Clare.'   20

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?'
 Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'
'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,
 'I speak the truth: you are my child.

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast; 25
 I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
 And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
 O mother,' she said, 'if this be true, 30
To keep the best man under the sun
 So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
 'But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's, 35
 When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
 'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
 And fling the diamond necklace by.' 40

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
 'But keep the secret all ye can.'
She said 'Not so: but I will know
 If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the nurse,
'The man will cleave unto his right.' 46
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.' 50
'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,
'So strange it seems to me.

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head, 55
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair. 60

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower: 65
'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,
  I am but as my fortunes are: 70
I am a beggar born,' she said,
  'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
  'For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,   75
  'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up!
  Her heart within her did not fail:
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
  And told him all her nurse's tale.   80

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:
  He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood:
'If you are not the heiress born,
  And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—

'If you are not the heiress born,   85
  And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
  And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

LORD TENNYSON.

THE DEAD WARRIOR

HOME they brought her warrior dead:
  She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All the maidens, watching, said,
  'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low, 5
  Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
  Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
  Lightly to the warrior stept, 10
Took the face-cloth from the face;
  Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
  Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears— 15
  'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

LORD TENNYSON.

THE RED THREAD OF HONOUR

ELEVEN men of England
  A breastwork charged in vain;
Eleven men of England
  Lie stripped, and gashed, and slain.

Slain, but of foes that guarded 5
  Their rock-built fortress well,
Some twenty had been mastered,
  When the last soldier fell.

Whilst Napier piloted his wondrous way
  Across the sand-waves of the desert sea, 10
Then flashed at once, on each fierce clan, dismay,
  Lord of their wild Truckee,

These missed the glen to which their steps were bent,
  Mistook a mandate, from afar half-heard,
And, in that glorious error, calmly went 15
  To death without a word.

The robber-chief mused deeply,
  Above those daring dead;
'Bring here,' at length he shouted,
  'Bring quick, the battle thread. 20
Let Eblis blast for ever
  Their souls, if Allah will:
But WE must keep unbroken
  The old rules of the Hill.

'Before the Ghiznee tiger 25
  Leapt forth to burn and slay;
Before the holy Prophet
  Taught our grim tribes to pray;
Before Secunder's lances
  Pierced through each Indian glen; 30
The mountain laws of honour
  Were framed for fearless men.

'Still, when a chief dies bravely,
 We bind with green *one* wrist—
Green for the brave, for heroes 35
 ONE crimson thread we twist.
Say ye, oh gallant hillmen,
 For these, whose life has fled,
Which is the fitting colour,
 The green one or the red?' 40

'Our brethren, laid in honoured graves, may wear
 Their green reward,' each noble savage said:
'To these, whom hawks and hungry wolves shall tear,
 Who dares deny the red?'

Thus conquering hate, and steadfast to the right, 45
 Fresh from the heart that haughty verdict came;
Beneath a waning moon, each spectral height
 Rolled back its loud acclaim.

Once more the chief gazed keenly
 Down on those daring dead; 50
From his good sword their heart's blood
 Crept to that crimson thread.
Once more he cried, 'The judgement,
 Good friends, is wise and true,
But though the red *be* given, 55
 Have we not more to do?

'These were not stirred by anger,
 Nor yet by lust made bold;
Renown they thought above them,
 Nor did they look for gold. 60

To them their leader's signal
  Was as the voice of God:
Unmoved and uncomplaining,
  The path it showed they trod.

'As, without sound or struggle,   65
  The stars unhurrying march,
Where Allah's finger guides them,
  Through yonder purple arch,
These Franks, sublimely silent,
  Without a quickened breath,   70
Went, in the strength of duty,
  Straight to their goal of death.

'If I were now to ask you
  To name our bravest man,
Ye all at once would answer,   75
  They called him Mehrab Khan.
He sleeps among his fathers,
  Dear to our native land,
With the bright mark he bled for
  Firm round his faithful hand.   80

'The songs they sing of Roostum
  Fill all the past with light;
If truth be in their music,
  He was a noble knight.
But were those heroes living,   85
  And strong for battle still,
Would Mehrab Khan or Roostum
  Have climbed, like these, the Hill?'

THE LOSS OF THE BIRKENHEAD

Supposed to be narrated by a soldier who survived.

RIGHT on our flank the crimson sun went down,
The deep sea rolled around in dark repose,
When, like the wild shriek from some captured town,
A cry of women rose.

The stout ship Birkenhead lay hard and fast, 5
Caught, without hope, upon a hidden rock;
Her timbers thrilled as nerves, when thro' them passed
The spirit of that shock.

And ever like base cowards, who leave their ranks
In danger's hour, before the rush of steel, 10
Drifted away, disorderly, the planks,
From underneath her keel.

Confusion spread, for, though the coast seemed near,
Sharks hovered thick along that white sea brink.
The boats could hold?—not all—and it was clear 15
She was about to sink.

'Out with those boats, and let us haste away,'
Cried one, 'ere yet yon sea the bark devours.'
The man thus clamouring was, I scarce need say,
No officer of ours. 20

We knew our duty better than to care
For such loose babblers, and made no reply,
Till our good colonel gave the word, and there
Formed us in line to die. 24

There rose no murmur from the ranks, no thought,
By shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek;
Our post to quit we were not trained, nor taught
To trample down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,
The oars ply back again, and yet again; 30
Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
Still under steadfast men.

What follows why recall? The brave who died,
Died without flinching in the bloody surf;
They sleep as well, beneath that purple tide, 35
As others, under turf;—

They sleep as well, and, roused from their wild grave,
Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
His weak ones, not in vain. 40

If that day's work no clasp or medal mark,
If each proud heart no cross of bronze may press,
Nor cannon thunder loud from Tower and Park,
This feel we, none the less:

That those whom God's high grace there saved from ill— 45
Those also, left His martyrs in the bay—
Though not by siege, though not in battle, still
Full well had earned their pay.

SIR FRANCIS H. DOYLE (1810–88).

POCAHONTAS

Wearied arm and broken sword
  Wage in vain the desperate fight;
Round him press a countless horde,
  He is but a single knight.
Hark! a cry of triumph shrill   5
  Through the wilderness resounds,
  As, with twenty bleeding wounds,
Sinks the warrior, fighting still.

Now they heap the fatal pyre,
  And the torch of death they light: 10
Ah! 'tis hard to die of fire!
  Who will shield the captive knight?
Round the stake with fiendish cry
  Wheel and dance the savage crowd,
  Cold the victim's mien and proud,   15
And his breast is bared to die.

Who will shield the fearless heart?
  Who avert the murderous blade?
From the throng, with sudden start,
  See there springs an Indian maid.   20
Quick she stands before the knight;
  'Loose the chain, unbind the ring;
  I am daughter of the King,
And I claim the Indian right!'

Dauntlessly aside she flings 25
Lifted axe and thirsty knife;
Fondly to his heart she clings,
And her bosom guards his life!
In the woods of Powhattan,
Still 'tis told, by Indian fires, 30
How a daughter of their sires
Saved the captive Englishman.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–63).

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon and night,
'Praise God,' sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
By which the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well; 5
O'er his work the boy's curls fell:

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, 'Praise God.'

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew. 10

Said Blaise, the listening monk, 'Well done;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

As well as if thy voice to-day
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome 15
Praises God from Peter's dome.'

Said Theocrite, 'Would God that I
Might praise Him, that great way, and die!'

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone. 20

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in Heaven, 'Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight.'

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth, 25
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite. 30

And from a boy, to youth he grew:
The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent, 35
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, 'A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear: 40

So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

Clearer loves sound other ways:
I miss my little human praise.'

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell 45
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery, 50

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade, 55
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer:

And rising from the sickness drear
He grew a priest, and now stood here. 60

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

'I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,
And set thee here; I did not well.

Vainly I left my angel-sphere, 65
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—
Creation's chorus stopped!

Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain. 70

With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up Creation's pausing strain.

Back to the cell and poor employ:
Become the craftsman and the boy!'

Theocrite grew old at home; 75
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's Dome.

One vanished as the other died:
They sought God side by side.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–89).

THE KNIGHT'S LEAP AT ALTENAHR

'So the foeman has fired the gate, men of mine,
  And the water is spent and done;
Then bring me a cup of the red Ahr-wine;
  I never shall drink but this one.

'And fetch me my harness, and saddle my horse, 5
  And lead him me round to the door;
He must take such a leap to-night perforce
  As horse never took before.

'I have lived by the saddle for years a score,
And if I must die on tree, 10
The old saddle tree, which has borne me of yore,
Is the properest timber for me.

'I have lived my life, I have fought my fight,
I have drunk my share of wine;
From Trier to Cöln there was never a knight 15
Lived a merrier life than mine.

'So now to show bishop, and burgher, and priest
How the Altenahr hawk can die,
If they smoke the old falcon out of his nest,
He must take to his wings and fly.' 20

He harnessed himself by the clear moonshine,
And he mounted his horse at the door,
And he took such a pull at the red Ahr-wine
As never man took before.

He spurred the old horse, and he held him tight,
And he leapt him out over the wall; 26
Out over the cliff, out into the night,
Three hundred feet of fall.

They found him next morning below in the glen,
And never a bone in him whole: 30
But heaven may yet have more mercy than men
On such a bold rider's soul.

CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819–75).

YUSSOUF

A STRANGER came one night to Yussouf's tent,
Saying, 'Behold one outcast and in dread,
Against whose life the bow of power is bent,
Who flies, and hath not where to lay his head;
I come to thee for shelter and for food, 5
To Yussouf, called through all our tribes "the Good".'

'This tent is mine,' said Yussouf, 'but no more
Than it is God's; come in, and be at peace;
Freely shalt thou partake of all my store
As I of His who buildeth over these 10
Our tents His glorious roof of night and day,
And at whose door none ever yet heard Nay.'

So Yussouf entertained his guest that night,
And, waking him ere day, said: 'Here is gold;
My swiftest horse is saddled for thy flight; 15
Depart before the prying day grow bold.'
As one lamp lights another, nor grows less,
So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

That inward light the stranger's face made grand,
Which shines from all self-conquest; kneeling low, 20
He bowed his forehead upon Yussouf's hand,
Sobbing: 'O Sheik, I cannot leave thee so;
I will repay thee; all this thou hast done
Unto that Ibrahim who slew thy son!'

'Take thrice the gold,' said Yussouf, 'for with thee
Into the desert, never to return, 26
My one black thought shall ride away from me;
First-born, for whom by day and night I yearn,
Balanced and just are all of God's decrees;
Thou art avenged, my first-born, sleep in peace!' 30

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819–91).

ROBIN HOOD AND THE WIDOW'S THREE SONS

THERE are twelve months in all the year,
  As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year
  Is the merry month of May.

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone, 5
  With a link a down and a day,
And there he met a silly old woman,
  Was weeping on the way.

'What news? what news, thou silly old woman?
  What news hast thou for me?' 10
Said she, 'There 's three squires in Nottingham town
  To-day is condemn'd to die.'

'O have they parishes burnt?' he said,
  'Or have they ministers slain?
Or have they robb'd any virgin, 15
  Or other men's wives have ta'en?'—

7 silly] simple.

'They have no parishes burnt, good sir,
  Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
  Nor other men's wives have ta'en.' 20

'O what have they done?' said bold Robin Hood,
  'I pray thee tell to me.'—
'It's for slaying of the King's fallow deer,
  Bearing their long bows with thee.'—

'Dost thou not mind, old woman,' he said, 25
  'Since thou made me sup and dine?
By the truth of my body,' quoth bold Robin Hood,
  'You could tell it in no better time.'

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
  With a link a down and a day, 30
And there he met with a silly old palmer,
  Was walking along the highway.

'What news? what news, thou silly old man?
  What news, I do thee pray?'—
Said he, 'Three squires in Nottingham town 35
  Are condemned to die this day.'—

'Come change thy apparel with me, old man,
  Come change thy apparel for mine;
Here is forty shillings in good silver,
  Go drink it in beer or wine.'— 40

'O thine apparel is good,' he said,
  'And mine is ragged and torn;
Wherever you go, wherever you ride,
  Laugh ne'er an old man to scorn.'—

'Come change thy apparel with me, old churl, 45
  Come change thy apparel with mine;
Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,
  Go feast thy brethren with wine.'

Then he put on the old man's hat,
  It stood full high on the crown: 50
'The first bold bargain that I come at,
  It shall make thee come down.'

Then he put on the old man's cloak,
  Was patch'd black, blue, and red;
He thought no shame, all the day long, 55
  To wear the bags of bread.

Then he put on the old man's breeks,
  Was patch'd from ballup to side;
'By the truth of my body,' bold Robin can say,
  'This man lov'd little pride!' 60

Then he put on the old man's hose,
  Were patch'd from knee to wrist;
'By the truth of my body,' said bold Robin Hood,
  'I'd laugh if I had any list.'

58 ballup] front, or flap. 64 list] inclination, desire for it.

Then he put on the old man's shoes, 65
  Were patch'd both beneath and aboon ;
Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
  'It 's good habit that makes a man !'

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
  With a link a down and a down, 70
And there he met with the proud Sheriff,
  Was walking along the town.

'O save, O save, O Sheriff,' he said,
  'O save, and you may see !
And what will you give to a silly old man 75
  To-day will your hangman be ?'

'Some suits, some suits,' the Sheriff he said,
  'Some suits I'll give to thee ;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thirteen
  To-day 's a hangman's fee.' 80

Then Robin he turns him round about,
  And jumps from stock to stone ;
'By the truth of my body,' the Sheriff he said,
  'That 's well jumped, thou nimble old man.'—

'I was ne'er a hangman in all my life, 85
  Nor yet intends to trade ;
But curst be he,' said bold Robin,
  'That first a hangman was made !

They took the gallows from the slack,
They set it in the glen,
They hang'd the proud Sheriff on that, 115
And releas'd their own three men.

ROBIN HOOD AND THE CURTALL FRIAR

In summer time, when leaves grow green,
And flowers are fresh and gay,
Robin Hood and his merry men
Were disposèd to play.

Then some would leape, and some would runne, 5
And some would use artillery;
'Which of you can a good bow draw,
A good archèr to be?

'Which of you can kill a bucke,
Or who can kill a doe; 10
Or who can kill a hart of greece,
Five hundreth foot him fro?'

Will Scadlocke he did kill a bucke,
And Midge he kild a doe;
And Little John kild a hart of greece, 15
Five hundreth foot him fro.

113 slack] hollow, dell.
Robin Hood. Title curtall friar] friar with a short frock.
11 hart of greece] hart in good condition. 14 Midge] Much.

And comming unto Fountaine Dale,
No farther would he ride;
There was he ware of the curtall fryer,
Walking by the water side.

The fryer had on a harnesse good, 45
And on his head a cap of steel,
Broad sword and buckler by his side,
And they became him weele.

Robin Hood lighted off his horse,
And tyed him to a thorne: 50
'Carry me over the water, thou curtall fryer,
Or else thy life's forlorne.'

The fryer tooke Robin Hood on his backe,
Deepe water he did bestride,
And spake neither good word nor bad, 55
Till he came at the other side.

Lightly leapt Robin offe the fryer's backe;
The fryer said to him againe,
'Carry me over this water, thou fine fellow,
Or it shall breed thy paine.' 60

Robin Hood took the fryer on his backe,
Deepe water he did bestride,
And spake neither good word nor bad,
Till he came at the other side.

52 forlorne] lost.

Lightly leapt the fryer off Robin Hood's back;
  Robin Hood said to him againe,
'Carry me over this water, thou curtall fryer,
  Or it shall breede thy pain.'

The fryer tooke Robin on 's backe againe,
  And stept in to the knee;
Till he came at the middle streame,
  Neither good nor bad spake he:

And coming to the middle streame,
  There he threw Robin in:
'And chuse thee, chuse thee, fine fellow,
  Whether thou wilt sink or swim.'

Robin Hood swam to a bush of broome,
  The fryer to a wigger wand;
Bold Robin Hood is gone to shore,
  And took his bow in his hand.

One of his best arrowes under his belt
  To the fryer he let fly;
The curtall fryer with his steel buckler
  Did put that arrow by.

'Shoot on, shoot on, thou fine fellow,
  Shoot as thou hast begun,
If thou shoot here a summer's day,
  Thy marke I will not shun.'

74 wigger] wicker, willow

Robin Hood shot passing well,
'Till all his arrows were gane; 90
They tooke their swords and steele bucklers,
They fought with might and maine,

From ten o' th' clock that very day,
Till four i' th' afternoon;
Then Robin Hood came to his knees, 95
Of the fryer to beg a boone.

'A boone, a boone, thou curtall fryer,
I beg it on my knee;
Give me leave to set my horne to my mouth,
And to blow blasts three.' 100

'That I will do,' said the curtall fryer,
'Of thy blasts I have no doubt;
I hope thou'lt blow so passing well,
Till both thy eyes fall out.'

Robin Hood set his horne to his mouth, 105
He blew out blasts three;
Halfe a hundreth yeomen, with bowes bent,
Came raking over the lee.

'Whose men are these,' said the fryer,
'They come so hastily?' 110
'Those are mine,' said Robin Hood;
'Fryer, what is that to thee?'

102 doubt] fear. 108 raking] walking hastily.

'Take up thy dogs,' said Little John,
'Fryer, at my bidding be.'
'Whose man art thou,' said the curtall fryer,
'Comes here to prate with me?' 140

'I am Little John, Robin Hood's man,
Fryer, I will not lie;
If thou take not up thy dogs soone,
I'll take up them and thee.'

Little John had a bow in his hand, 145
He shot with might and main;
Soon halfe a score of the fryer's dogs
Lay dead upon the plain.

'Hold thy hand, good fellow,' said the curtall fryer,
'Thy master and I will agree; 150
And we will have new orders taken,
With all hast that may be.'

'If thou wilt forsake fair Fountaine's Dale,
And Fountaine's Abbey free,
Every Sunday throwout the yeere, 155
A noble shall be thy fee:

'And every holiday through the yeere,
Changed shall thy garment be,
If thou wilt goe to faire Nottingham,
And there remaine with me.' 160

which, by the forest laws, must have its tail cut short, partly as a mark, and partly from a notion that the tail of a dog is necessary to him in running' (Nares).

156 noble] a gold coin worth 6*s.* 8*d.*

This curtall fryer had kept Fountaine's Dale
  Seven long yeeres and more,
There was neither knight, lord, nor earle,
  Could make him yeeld before.

MARY AMBREE

When captains courageous, whom death could no
  daunt,
Did march to the siege of the city of Gaunt,
They mustered their soldiers by two and by three,
And the foremost in battle was Mary Ambree.

When brave Sir John Major was slain in her sight,
Who was her true lover, her joy and delight,
Because he was slain most treacherously
Then vowed to revenge him Mary Ambree.

She clothèd herself from the top to the toe
In buff of the bravest, most seemly to show. 10
A fair shirt of mail then slippèd on she;
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

A helmet of proof she straight did provide,
A strong arming sword she girt by her side,
On her hand a goodly fair gauntlet put she; 15
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

Then took she her sword and her target in hand,
Bidding all such, as would, be of her band:
To wait on her person came thousand and three:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree? 20

My soldiers, she saith, so valiant and bold,
Now follow your captain whom you do behold;
Still foremost in battle myself will I be:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

Then cried out her soldiers, and loud they did say,
So well thou becomest this gallant array, 26
Thy heart and thy weapons so well do agree,
There was none ever like Mary Ambree.

She cheerèd her soldiers, that foughten for life, 29
With ancient and standard, with drum and with fife,
With brave clanging trumpets, that sounded so free;
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

Before I will see the worst of you all
To come into danger of death, or of thrall,
This hand and this life I will venture so free: 35
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

She led up her soldiers in battle array,
'Gainst three times their number by break of the day:
Seven hours in skirmish continuèd she:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree? 40

30 ancient] ensign.

She fillèd the skies with the smoke of her shot,
And her enemies' bodies with bullets so hot;
For one of her own men a score killèd she:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

And when her false gunner, to spoil her intent, 45
Away all her pellets and powder had sent,
Straight with her keen weapon she slashed him in
three:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

Being falsely betrayed for lucre of hire,
At length she was forcèd to make a retire; 50
Then her soldiers into a strong castle drew she:
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

Her foes they beset her on every side,
As thinking close siege she could never abide;
To beat down the walls they all did decree: 55
But stoutly defied them brave Mary Ambree.

Then took she her sword and her target in hand,
And mounting the walls all undaunted did stand,
There daring their captains to match any three:
O what a brave captain was Mary Ambree! 60

Now say, English captain, what wouldest thou give
To ransom thyself, which else must not live?
Come yield thyself quickly, or slain thou must be.
Then smilèd sweetly brave Mary Ambree.

Ye captains courageous, of valour so bold, 65
Whom think you before you now you do behold?
A knight, sir, of England, and captain so free,
Who shortly with us a prisoner must be.

No captain of England; behold in your sight 69
Two breasts in my bosom, and therefore no knight:
No knight, sirs, of England, nor captain you see,
But a poor simple lass, called Mary Ambree.

But art thou a woman, as thou dost declare,
Whose valour hath proved so undaunted in war?
If England doth yield such brave lasses as thee, 75
Full well may they conquer, fair Mary Ambree.

The Prince of Great Parma heard of her renown,
Who long had advancèd for England's fair crown;
He wooed her and sued her his mistress to be,
And offered rich presents to Mary Ambree. 80

But this virtuous maiden despisèd them all,
I'll ne'er sell my honour for purple nor pall:
A maiden of England, sir, never will be
The toy of a monarch, quoth Mary Ambree.

Then to her own country she back did return, 85
Still holding the foes of fair England in scorn:
Therefore English captains of every degree
Sing forth the brave valours of Mary Ambree.

V

These news did come to Kemp Owyne,
  Where he lived, far beyond the sea; 20
He hasted him to Craigy's sea,
  And on the savage beast look'd he.

VI

Her breath was strang, her hair was lang,
  And twisted was about the tree,
And with a swing she came about: 25
  'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.

VII

'Here is a royal belt,' she cried,
  'That I have found in the green sea;
And while your body it is on,
  Drawn shall your blood never be; 30
But if you touch me, tail or fin,
  I vow my belt your death shall be.'

VIII

He steppèd in, gave her a kiss,
  The royal belt he brought him wi';
Her breath was strang, her hair was lang, 35
  And twisted twice about the tree,
And with a swing she came about:
  'Come to Craigy's sea, and kiss with me.

KINMONT WILLIE

O HAVE ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroope?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Haribee to hang him up?

Had Willie had but twenty men, 5
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his cumpanie.

They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back; 10
They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.

They led him thro' the Liddel-rack,
And also thro' the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle castell, 15
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.

'My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the Border law?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?' 20

12 Liddel-rack] a ford on the Liddel.

'Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
  There's never a Scot shall set thee free:
Before ye cross my castle yate,
  I trow ye shall take farewell o' me.

'Fear na ye that, my lord,' quo' Willie: 25
  'By the faith o' my body, Lord Scroope,' he said.
'I never yet lodged in a hostelrie
  But I paid my lawing before I gaed.'

Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,
  In Branksome Ha', where that he lay, 30
That Lord Scroope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
  Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
  He garr'd the red wine spring on hie—
'Now Christ's curse on my head,' he said, 35
  'But avengèd of Lord Scroope I'll be!

'O is my basnet a widow's curch?
  Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
Or my arm a ladye's lily hand,
  That an English lord should lightly me! 40

'And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
  Against the truce of Border tide?
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
  Is Keeper here on the Scottish side?

21 reiver] robber. 23 yate] gate. 28 lawing] reckoning. 34 garr'd] made. 37 basnet] helmet. curch] kerchief, coif. 40 lightly] treat disrespectfully.

'And have they e'en ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear? 46
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

'O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none, 50
I would slight Carlisle castell high,
Though it were builded of marble stone.

'I would set that castell in a low,
And sloken it with English blood!
There's never a man in Cumberland 55
Should ken where Carlisle castell stood.

'But since nae war's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be;
I'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!' 60

He has call'd him forty Marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, call'd
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

He has call'd him forty Marchmen bauld, 65
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch;
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue.

51 slight] demolish. 53 low] flame. 54 sloken] slake. 67 splent on spauld] armour on shoulder. 68 gleuves] gloves.

There were five and five before them a',
  Wi' hunting-horns and bugles bright: 70
And five and five came wi' Buccleuch,
  Like Warden's men, array'd for fight.

And five and five, like a mason gang,
  That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five, like broken men; 75
  And so they reach'd the Woodhouselee.

And as we cross'd the Bateable Land,
  When to the English side we held,
The first o' men that we met wi',
  Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde? 80

'Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?'
  Quo' fause Sakelde; 'come tell to me!'
'We go to hunt an English stag,
  Has trespass'd on the Scots countrie.'

'Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men?' 85
  Quo' fause Sakelde; 'come tell me true!'
'We go to catch a rank reiver,
  Has broken faith wi' the bauld Buccleuch.'

'Where be ye gaun, ye mason lads,
  Wi' a' your ladders, lang and hie?' 90
'We gang to herry a corbie's nest,
  That wons not far frae Woodhouselee.'

77 Bateable Land] Debateable Land, between the rivers Esk and Sark. 91 herry] harry, rob. corbie] raven. 92 wons] dwells.

'Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?'
  Quo' fause Sakelde; 'come tell to me!'
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band, 95
  And the never a word of lear had he.

'Why trespass ye on the English side?
  Row-footed outlaws, stand!' quo' he:
The never a word had Dickie to say,
  Sae he thrust the lance through his fause bodie.

Then on we held for Carlisle toun, 101
  And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross'd;
The water was great and meikle of spait,
  But the never a horse nor man we lost.

And when we reach'd the Staneshaw bank, 105
  The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the laird garr'd leave our steeds,
  For fear that they should stamp and nie.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
  The wind began full loud to blaw; 110
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
  When we came beneath the castle wa'.

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
  Till we placed the ladders against the wa';
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell 115
  To mount the first before us a'.

96 lear] lore. 98 row-footed] rough-footed. 103 spait] flood.

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
  He flung him down upon the lead—
'Had there not been peace between our lands,
  Upon the other side thou hadst gaed!— 120

'Now sound out, trumpets!' quo' Buccleuch;
  'Let 's waken Lord Scroope right merrilie!'
Then loud the Warden's trumpet blew—
  O wha dare meddle wi' me?

Then speedilie to wark we gaed, 125
  And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole through a sheet of lead,
  And so we wan to the castle ha'.

They thought King James and a' his men
  Had won the house wi' bow and spear; 130
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
  That put a thousand in sic a stear!

Wi' coulters, and wi' forehammers,
  We garr'd the bars bang merrilie,
Until we came to the inner prison, 135
  Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

And when we cam to the lower prison,
  Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie—
'O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
  Upon the morn that thou 's to die?' 140

126 slogan] clan war-cry. 132 stear] stir, commotion.
133 coulters] ploughshares. forehammers] sledge-hammers.

We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank 165
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men on horse and foot
Cam wi' the keen Lord Scroope along.

Buccleuch has turn'd to Eden Water,
Even where it flow'd frae bank to brim, 170
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them through the stream.

He turn'd him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he;
'If ye like na my visit in merry England, 175
In fair Scotland come visit me!'

All sore astonish'd stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes,
When through the water they had gane. 180

'He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wadna have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie.'

179 trew] trust.

THE GAY GOSHAWK

'O WELL 's me o' my gay goshawk,
  That he can speak and flee;
He'll carry a letter to my love,
  Bring back another to me.'

'O how can I your true-love ken, 5
  Or how can I her know?
Whan frae her mouth I never heard couth,
  Nor wi' my eyes her saw.'

'O well sal ye my true-love ken,
  As soon as you her see; 10
For, of a' the flow'rs in fair Englan',
  The fairest flow'r is she.

'At even at my love's bow'r-door
  There grows a bowing birk,
An' sit ye down and sing thereon, 15
  As she gangs to the kirk.

'An' four-and-twenty ladies fair
  Will wash and go to kirk,
But well shall ye my true-love ken,
  For she wears goud on her skirt. 20

Title. Goshawk] large short-winged hawk.
1 O well 's me o'] it is good for me to have. 7 couth] word. 14 birk] birch.

'An' four-and-twenty gay ladies
Will to the mass repair,
But well sal ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her hair.'

O even at that lady's bow'r-door 25
There grows a bowin' birk,
An' he set down and sang thereon,
As she gaed to the kirk.

'O eet and drink, my marys a',
The wine flows you among, 30
Till I gang to my shot-window,
An' hear yon bonny bird's song.

'Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,
The song ye sang the streen,
For I ken by your sweet singin' 35
You're frae my true-love sen'.'

O first he sang a merry song,
An' then he sang a grave,
An' then he peck'd his feathers grey,
To her the letter gave. 40

'Ha, there's a letter frae your love,
He says he sent you three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he'll die.

29 marys] maidens. 31 shot-window] window opening on hinges. 34 the streen] yestreen, yesterday evening. 41 Ha] Have, i.e. take this.

'He bids you write a letter to him ; 45
He says he 's sent you five ;
He canna wait your love langer,
Tho' you're the fairest woman alive.'

'Ye bid him bake his bridal-bread,
And brew his bridal-ale, 50
An' I'll meet him in fair Scotlan'
Lang, lang or it be stale.'

She 's doen her to her father dear,
Fa'n low down on her knee :
'A boon, a boon, my father dear, 55
I pray you, grant it me.'

'Ask on, ask on, my daughter,
An' granted it sal be ;
Except ae squire in fair Scotland,
An' him you sall never see.' 60

'The only boon, my father dear,
That I do crave of thee,
Is, gin I die in southin lands,
In Scotland to bury me.

'An' the firstin kirk that ye come till, 65
Ye gar the bells be rung,
An' the nextin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the mess be sung.

52 stale] late. 53 doen her betaken herself. 63 gin] if.
southin] southern.

'An' the thirdin kirk that ye come till,
You deal gold for my sake, 70
An' the fourthin kirk that ye come till,
You tarry there till night.'

She is doen her to her bigly bowr,
As fast as she coud fare,
An' she has tane a sleepy draught, 75
That she had mixed wi' care.

She 's laid her down upon her bed,
An' soon she 's fa'n asleep,
And soon o'er every tender limb
Cauld death began to creep. 80

Whan night was flown, an' day was come,
Nae ane that did her see
But thought she was as surely dead
As ony lady coud be.

Her father an' her brothers dear 85
Gar'd make to her a bier;
The tae half was o' guid red gold,
The tither o' silver clear.

Her mither an' her sisters fair
Gar'd work for her a sark; 90
The tae half was o' cambrick fine,
The tither o' needle wark.

73 bigly] commodious. 86 Gar'd make] Caused to be made. 87 The tae] The one. 88 The tither] The other. 90 sark] shift.

The firstin kirk that they came till,
 They gar'd the bells be rung,
An' the nextin kirk that they came till, 95
 They gar'd the mess be sung.

The thirdin kirk that they came till,
 They dealt gold for her sake,
An' the fourthin kirk that they came till,
 Lo, there they met her make! 100

'Lay down, lay down the bigly bier,
 Lat me the dead look on':
Wi' cherry cheeks and ruby lips
 She lay and smil'd on him.

'O ae sheave o' your bread, true-love, 105
 An' ae glass o' your wine,
For I hae fasted for your sake
 These fully days is nine.

'Gang hame, gang hame, my seven bold brothers,
 Gang hame and sound your horn; 110
An' ye may boast in southin lans
 Your sister 's play'd you scorn.'

100 make] mate, lover. 105 sheave] slice. 110 sound your horn] go and whistle.

THE HEIR OF LINNE

The bonny heir, and the well-faur'd heir,
The weary heir o' Linne—
Yonder he stands at his father's yetts,
And naebody bids him in.

'O see for he gangs, and see for he stands, 5
The unthrifty heir o' Linne!
O see for he stands on the cauld causey,
And nane bids him come in!'

His father and mother were dead him fro',
And so was the head o' his kin; 10
To the cards and dice that he did run,
Did neither cease nor blin.

To drink the wine that was so clear
With all he would mak' merry;
And then bespake him John o' the Scales, 15
To the heir of Linne said he:

'How doest thou, thou Lord of Linne?
Doest want or gold or fee?
Wilt thou not sell thy lands so broad
To such a good fellow as me?' 20

1 well-faur'd] well-favoured. 3 yetts] gates. 7 causey] causeway, pavement. 12 blin] stint, check.

He told the gold upon the board,
Wanted never a bare penny:
'The gold is thine, the land is mine,
The heir of Linne I will be.'

'Here's gold enow,' saith the heir of Linne, 25
'For me and my company.'
He drank the wine that was so clear,
And with all he made merry.

Within three quarters of a year
His gold it waxèd thin; 30
His merry men were from him gone,
Bade him, 'To the de'il ye'se gang!'

'Now well-a-day!' said the heir of Linne,
'I have left not one penny.
God be with my father!' he said, 35
'On his land he lived merrily.'

His nourice at her window look'd,
Beholding dale and down,
And she beheld this distress'd young man
Come walking to the town. 40

'O see for he gangs, and see for he stands,
The weary heir o' Linne!
O see for he stands on the cauld causey,
And nane bids him come in!'—

37 nourice] nurse.

'Sing owre again that sang, nourice, 45
The sang ye sung just now.'—
'I never sung a sang i' my life
But I would sing ower to you.

'Come here, come here, Willy,' she said,
'And rest yoursel' wi' me; 50
I hae seen you in better days,
And in jovial company.'—

'Gie me a sheave o' your bread, nourice,
And a bottle o' your wine,
And I will pay it you ower again 55
When I am Lord of Linne.'—

'Ye'se get a sheave o' my bread, Willy,
And a bottle o' my wine;
But ye'll pay me when the seas gang dry,
For ye'll ne'er be Lord o' Linne.' 60

Then he turn'd him right and round about,
As will a woman's son,
And aff he set and bent his way
And cam' to the house o' Linne.

But when he cam' to that castle, 65
They were set down to dine;
A score of nobles there he saw,
Sat drinking at their wine.

57 sheave] slice.

Then some bade gie him beef and fish,
  And some but bane and fin, 70
And some bade gie him naething at a',
  But let the palmer gang.

Then out it speaks him John o' Scales,
  A saucy word spak' he:
'Put round the cup, give the beggar a sup, 75
  Let him fare on his way.'

Then out it speaks Sir Ned Magnew,
  Ane o' young Willy's kin:
'This youth was ance a sprightly boy
  As ever lived in Linne.' 80

He turn'd him right and round about,
  As will a woman's son,
Then minded him on a little wee key
  That his mother left to him.

His mother left him this little wee key 85
  A little before she deed;
And bade him keep this little wee key
  Till he was in maist need.

Then forth he went, these nobles left
  All drinking in the room; 90
Wi' walking rod intill his hand
  He walk'd the castle roun':

72 palmer] wanderer.

Till that he found a little door,
  And therein slipp'd the key;
And there he found three chests in fere 95
  Of the red and the white monie.

Back then through the nobles a'
  He went and did not blin,
Until he cam' where John o' the Scales
  Was seated at the wine. 100

Then out and spake it John o' Scales.
  He spake wi' mock and jeer:
'I'd gie a seat to the Lord o' Linne
  If sae be that he were here.

'When the lands o' Linne a-selling were 105
  A' men said they were free;
I will sell them twenty pound better cheap
  Nor ever I bought of thee.'—

'I tak' ye to witness, nobles a'!'
  —He cast him a God's penny— 110
'I will buy them twenty pound better cheap
  Nor ever he bought of me.'

He's done him to the gaming-table,
  For it stood fair and clean;
And there he's told as much rich gold 115
  As free'd the lands o' Linne.

95 in fere] together. 110 God's penny] earnest or luck-penny.

He told the gold there over the board,
Wanted never a broad penny;
'The gold is thine, the land is mine,
Lord o' Linne again I'll be.' 120

'Well-a-day!' said John o' the Scales' wife,
'Well-a-day, and woe is me!
Yesterday I was the Lady o' Linne,
And now I'm a naebody!'

But 'Fare thee well,' said the heir of Linne, 125
'Now John o' the Scales!' said he:
'A curse light on me if ever again
My lands be in jeopardy!'

SIR PATRICK SPENS

The King sits in Dumfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine;
'O whare will I get a skeely skipper,
To sail this new ship of mine?'

O up and spake an eldern knight, 5
Sat at the king's right knee:
'Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
That ever sailed the sea.'

3 skeely] skilful.

Our king has written a braid letter,
  And seal'd it with his hand, 10
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
  Was walking on the strand.

'To Noroway, to Noroway,
  To Noroway o'er the faem;
The King's daughter of Noroway, 15
  'Tis thou maun bring her hame.'

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
  Sae loud loud laughèd he;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
  The tear blinded his ee. 20

'O wha is this has done this deed,
  And tauld the King o' me,
To send us out, at this time of the year,
  To sail upon the sea?

'Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet, 25
  Our ship must sail the faem;
The King's daughter of Noroway,
  'Tis we must fetch her hame.'

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn
  Wi' a' the speed they may; 30
They hae landed in Noroway
  Upon a Wodensday.

9 braid] large and folded.

They hadna been a week, a week,
  In Noroway, but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway 35
  Began aloud to say:

'Ye Scottish men spend a' our King's goud,
  And a' our Queenis fee.'
'Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud!
  Fu' loud I hear ye lie 40

'For I brought as much white monie,
  As gane my men and me,
And I brought a half-fou of gude red goud,
  Out o'er the sea wi' me.

'Make ready, make ready—my merry men a'! 45
  Our gude ship sails the morn:'
'Now, ever alake, my master dear,
  I fear a deadly storm!

'I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
  Wi' the auld moon in her arm; 50
And if we gang to sea, master,
  I fear we'll come to harm.'

They hadna sailed a league, a league,
  A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud, 55
  And gurly grew the sea.

41 white monie] silver. 42 gane] suffice. 43 half-fou] eighth part of a peck. 46 the morn] to-morrow. 47 alake] alack, alas. 55 lift] sky. 56 gurly] growling, stormy.

The ankers brak, and the topmasts lap,
  It was sic a deadly storm;
And the waves cam o'er the broken ship
  Till a' her sides were torn. 60

'O where will I get a gude sailor
  To take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall topmast,
  To see if I can spy land?'

'O here am I, a sailor gude, 65
  To take the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall topmast;
  But I fear you'll ne'er spy land.'

He hadna gane a step, a step,
  A step but barely ane, 70
When a bout flew out of our goodly ship,
  And the salt sea it came in.

'Gae, fetch a web o' the silken claith,
  Another o' the twine,
And wap them into our ship's side, 75
  And let nae the sea come in.'

They fetch'd a web o' the silken claith,
  Another o' the twine,
And they wapp'd them round that gude ship's side,
  But still the sea cam in. 80

57 lap] sprang. 71 bout] bolt. 74 twine] rope.
75 wap] wrap, throw.

O laith, laith, were our gude Scots lords
  To weet their cork-heel'd shoon!
But lang or a' the play was play'd,
  They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed, 85
  That flatter'd on the faem;
And mony was the gude lord's son,
  That never mair cam hame.

The ladyes wrang their fingers white,
  The maidens tore their hair, 90
A' for the sake of their true loves,
  For them they'll see nae mair.

O lang, lang, may the ladyes sit,
  Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens 95
  Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang, may the maidens sit,
  Wi' their goud kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
  For them they'll see nae mair. 100

O forty miles off Aberdeen,
  'Tis fifty fathoms deep;
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
  Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

81 laith] loath. 86 flatter'd] tossed afloat.
98 kaims] combs.